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4 October 1968

DCI BRIEFING  
FOR PFIAB

THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY AND THE POLICY MAKER

- I. I would like to discuss the issues which this Board raised in its report to the President on June 7, expressing concern over whether the normal process of intelligence production is adequate in times of crisis.
  - A. Specifically, you asked us to see if the intelligence process, itself, leads to an inordinate delay between the time when raw data are reported from the field, and when they are made available to the policy maker. It noted that the policy maker, in the meantime, tends to depend upon staff aides to keep him informed on fast-breaking developments.
  - B. The Board also suggested that the processing of intelligence leads to loss of color, and that policy makers who depend

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on the intelligence publications do not glean from them the kind of "atmospherics" which can be essential to understanding a problem.

II. We have undertaken the kind of study suggested by the Board. It is not ready for presentation to you at this time, but I would like to tell you of its progress, and report several of our tentative findings.

A. For the past six weeks, under the chairmanship of my Deputy for Intelligence, Jack Smith, an interagency working group has been engaged in a thoroughgoing review of the procedures employed in the production of critical intelligence by the Agency, the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, the Defense Intelligence Agency and the National Security Agency.

B. Work was interrupted, briefly, by the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia.

C. Each of the agencies now has completed a review of its internal procedures.

D. In addition, we have drafted a paper on procedures within the community as a whole.

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This over-all paper is being coordinated. Officers at the executive level in each of the agencies are reviewing the text most carefully. I am hopeful that the study will be completed in the near future.

III. In general, we have not found serious flaws, although a few shortcomings have been uncovered. These will be corrected. For the most part they involve duplication of effort, rather than conflict.

IV. Facilities do exist for providing the President and his senior advisers in the National Security Council with critical intelligence on any subject, at any time, and in any level of detail.

A. This does not imply that every question can be answered, or that warning can be given for every significant event.

1. The information sometimes simply is not available or obtainable, or is inaccurate.
2. The analyst, no matter how carefully trained, remains fallible.

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3. Thus, even with the best possible machinery, intelligence is subject to error.
- B. Intelligence not only must be available to the policy maker; it must reach him,
  1. For this reason, we have carefully considered the relationship between the policy maker and his intelligence support.
- C. It goes without saying that this relationship must be close, effective and candid. We believe it to be the most important link in the intelligence process. The flow of information between intelligence officer and policy maker must be rapid, concise, and unambiguous.
  1. It must not be cluttered by excess detail, extraneous subject matter, or useless verbiage.
  2. It must allow for the presentation of differing views, but ensure that these stem from a common base of raw data.
  3. Above all, it must be tailored to the personality of the man for whom it is intended.

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- D. Moreover, this flow must operate in two directions. The analyst may be familiar with the problems and the range of choices which confront the policy maker, but he is not always in a position to estimate the type of support which will prove most effective.
1. This dilemma can be critical in fast-moving crises, when the timeliness of an intelligence report is one of its chief values.
  2. The analyst, wherever possible, should know what decisions already have been reached, what questions the policy maker needs answered, and in what order, and finally, what questions need no longer be addressed.
- V. As I said earlier, we are satisfied that our agencies are able to meet these requirements for support of the policy maker, although our internal methods differ widely.
- A. The Bureau of Intelligence and Research, the Defense Intelligence Agency and the National Security Agency have departmental

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missions. Each must shape its production to the unique requirements of its principal officers--the Secretaries of State and Defense, the Joint Chiefs, and others.

B. The Central Intelligence Agency supports me in my role as the President's principal intelligence officer. We are charged with the production of coordinated, national intelligence.

- VI. The evaluation and coordination of intelligence is not as time-consuming as might be supposed. And--thanks to secure communications facilities and such devices as long distance xerography--these processes are being accelerated every day.
- VII. In times of crisis, the process is speeded up still more to ensure that the policy maker has available to him the best judgment of the community.

A. It is true that there does exist some problem of bleaching through processing. We do not regard it as serious. In fact, it probably is less of a problem than the false alarms which could be caused by the circulation of erroneous or conflicting field reports which

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lack the analytical comment or back-up data essential for proper perspective.

- B. General Taylor has suggested that the policy maker might benefit from the presence on his staff of trained intelligence officers. Assuming that the intelligence aides had ready access to their principals, it might prove a boon. It is an idea we are interested in exploring.

VIII. Finally, there is the question of the timeliness of routine intelligence publications.

- A. The routine publications are not geared to crisis reporting; they are designed to convey standard, well-balanced information in "normal" times.
- B. During crises, they are supplanted to a large extent by special situation reports, written and oral briefings, special estimates, and memoranda designed to answer questions posed by the policy maker.

IX. In closing, I would like to share with you one other problem which our working group has begun to explore. That is the problem of crisis staffing.

- A. In the nature of things, we cannot staff against the likelihood of crises in every

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area of the world. We have neither the money nor the analytical resources.

- B. When a crisis occurs, we seek to make maximum use of our area specialists--fleshing them out, if you will, by the addition of experienced generalists. During the recent Czech crisis, for example, we were able to employ most of our Soviet and even our Western European analysts, and to do so early enough so that most, if not all, were able to master the minute-by-minute detail which brings the unique kind of crisis "expertise" which cannot be gained once a crisis is very far along.
- C. Had there been a second crisis in the same area, requiring the use of the same corps of analysts, we would have been overtaxed.
- D. This limitation may not be unique to the intelligence community; it may extend through at least some of the several policy making levels. And it may account, in part, for the fact that premonitory intelligence sometimes does not have the impact it should have. In any case, I invite you to consider the

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problem of engaging the policy maker's attention in an emerging crisis, once he already is immersed in an earlier crisis.

1. Last January, for example, the preoccupation of the policy makers with the seizure of the USS Pueblo may well have contributed to the difference of degree in the "crisis atmosphere" between Washington, preoccupied with the fate of the ship and its crew, and Saigon on the eve of the Tet offensive.

~~Proposed drafts and changes  
by DIA, STATE & NSA, CIA~~

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